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SUBJECT: NEW INTERIOR MINISTER COMMITTED TO FIGHT TIP

REF: A. NICOSIA 661

[1B.](#) NICOSIA 613 NICOSIA 519

[¶1.](#) (U) Combatting trafficking in persons ranked amongst his highest priorities, Republic of Cyprus Interior Minister Christos Patsalides, just six weeks in office, informed the Ambassador August 24. Prior experience as a professor of European Union law had made him aware of the international condemnation of TIP, and from his position at the head of Cyprus's lead anti-trafficking ministry, he was determined the Republic would meet its international commitments. As proof, he highlighted Cyprus's recently signed trafficking law, which harmonized Cypriot legislation with the EU Acquis and other international instruments (Ref A) and fulfilled one element of its national anti-TIP action plan (Ref B). Patsalides noted progress on a second front as well: the government had concluded the hiring process to staff its victims' shelter and had begun physical renovation of the shelter site. Uncomfortable he could not proffer an expected completion/opening date, the Minister ordered his assistant to canvass working-level interagency contacts to obtain this information.

[¶2.](#) (U) Last, but promising nonetheless, Patsalides repeated one of the first messages he had received from President Tassos Papadopoulos upon taking Interior's reins. The government must investigate ways to abolish the "artiste" worker classification utilized by many impresarios to import women for work in Cyprus's notorious cabarets and nightclubs, Papadopoulos had demanded. His Greek counterpart recently had received a similar, high-level tasking and crafted a workable solution, Patsalides revealed, and he intended to mine the GoG's ideas liberally.

[¶3.](#) (U) At the impromptu press conference that followed, the Minister emphasized the imperative of an international TIP fight. Cyprus had taken positive steps, he asserted, pointing to the new law and other measures, but much work remained undone. Media gave wide coverage August 25 and 26 to Patsalides's remarks.

[¶4.](#) (SBU) Comment: Patsalides seemed sincere in his determination to combat TIP. As a Euro-phile, he cannot be comfortable with Cyprus's last-place finish among EU member-states on the Department's trafficking ranking, a number we intend to drop liberally in our MoI follow-up. First in line for Embassy attention is the long-sought establishment of the victims' shelter. If it means opening the building even one day sooner, we'll strap on our own tool belts to help in construction.

SCHLICHER